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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 13, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: More normal temperatures arrived throughout most of Florida for the week of April 6 through April 12. Rainfall for the week totaled from traces over most of the State to over four inches reported in some northern counties. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from three degrees below to one degree above normal with daytime highs in the 80s. A few smaller stations reported temperatures reaching the lower 90s. Nighttime lows in Key West reached into the low 60s while the rest of the state was in the 40s and 50s.

FIELD CROPS: Fieldwork was slowed in some northern areas with increased rainfall but continued in the central and southern parts of the State. Cotton planting has started but has been hampered by rains. Corn planting is complete in some areas but is slowed in other areas from the wet field conditions. Land preparations are underway for peanuts, and tobacco, but has been slowed by rains. Wheat and other small grains are heading out now. Sugarcane harvesting continues to slow seasonally. Some mills are closed.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	5	0	0	2
Short	8	5	58	4	1	68
Adequate	80	84	34	93	89	30
Surplus	11	10	3	3	10	0

VEGETABLES: Tomato harvest continues with the progress shifting northward. Some northern watermelon growers have finished planting. Vegetables available include cabbage, carrots, celery, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and light supplies of endive, escarole, lettuce, and okra.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north areas, most pasture is in fair condition. Unseasonable cold temperatures and flooding limited grass growth in permanent pasture. Hay is at a premium. Winter small grain grazing is fair to strong. In the central counties, condition of both pasture and cattle is fair to excellent. In the south, cattle and pasture conditions are fair to good. Statewide, most cattle are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0
Fair	20	10	25	25
Good	70	90	75	75
Excellent	10	0	0	0

CITRUS: Temperatures fluctuated considerably this week in most areas of Florida's citrus belt. Monday and Tuesday were sunny and warm. Then there were high winds and scattered showers on Wednesday and Thursday. Friday through Sunday there were clear days, with sunny skies and clear weather with daytime temperatures in the 70s to low 80s. Most groves are in very good condition. However, some of the growers on the high sand hills are irrigating to maintain good tree condition as their trees are in the process of setting next year's crop. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues to be very active in all areas. Grapefruit harvest is slowing as supplies in all areas are beginning to run low. Some Honey tangerines and Temples are still being picked for both the fresh markets and the juice plants.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping, and discing cover crops prior to harvesting, for fire protection and to cut up debris remaining from the hedging and topping process. Dead trees are being cut out, pushed out and burned to make room for new trees soon to be planted. Post bloom nutritional sprays are still being applied as some of the trees are completing their bloom cycle. Spring herbicides are being applied under trees of all ages. Young trees are being fertilized in all areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Mar 30	Apr 6	Apr 13
Valencia oranges	6,677,000	6,670,000	6,743,000
All grapefruit	1,748,000	1,681,000	1,255,000
Honey tangerines	127,000	117,000	115,000
Temples	12,000	10,000	8,000

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.